



PREFACE

The Department of Criminal Justice Services has been designated by the Governor to administer federal funds granted to Virginia through the Children's Justice Act. This federal funding has been specifically earmarked for the improvement of legal and administrative proceedings regarding the investigation and prosecution of child abuse, child sexual abuse and child maltreatment fatalities. Emphasis has been placed on interdisciplinary activities that reduce or limit trauma to child victims.

For a number of years the Department of Criminal Justice Services has provided multidisciplinary training and technical assistance for law enforcement and child protective service professionals, Commonwealth's Attorneys and medical and mental health professionals. In addition, profession-specific conferences and technical assistance have been developed and offered to these targeted groups. This document was originally developed in response to requests by local prosecutors for an easy reference on child abuse statutes and Virginia case law relevant to the prosecution of child abuse cases.

At that time, the Department of Criminal Justice Services contracted with the American Prosecutors Research Institute's National Center for the Prosecution of Child Abuse to provide training and technical assistance in Virginia. This document was initially developed by Virginia prosecutors and attorneys from the National Center for the Prosecution of Child Abuse, and it was later reviewed and edited by experienced child abuse prosecutors in Virginia. The 2003 revision was done by Emeritus Professor Robert E. Shepherd, Jr., of the T.C. Williams School of Law of the University of Richmond.

This document was originally designed as a supplement for a publication of the National Center entitled INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OF CHILD ABUSE (hereinafter MANUAL), first published in 1987 and revised in 1994 and 2003. This MANUAL provides general strategy and step-by-step guidance in evaluating, investigating, charging and trying child abuse cases. Although the current edition of CHILD ABUSE: VIRGINIA STATUTES AND CASE LAW (hereinafter VIRGINIA STATUTES) cross-references the 2003 National Center's MANUAL, VIRGINIA STATUTES can be used independently. While the National Center's publication is a useful tool for prosecutors, VIRGINIA STATUTES provides a practical resource for Virginia prosecutors as they handle these cases.

